

## § 4284.511

## 7 CFR Ch. XLII (1–1–14 Edition)

in-kind. Sufficient information should be included such that USDA can verify all representations.

(7) *Certification.* Applicants must certify that matching funds will be available at the same time grant funds are anticipated to be spent and that matching funds will be spent in advance of grant funding, such that for every dollar of grant that is advanced, not less than an equal amount of match funds will have been funded prior to submitting the request for advance.

### § 4284.511 Evaluation screening.

The Agency will conduct an initial screening of all proposals to determine whether the applicant is eligible and whether the application is complete and sufficiently responsive to the requirements set forth in the applicable RFP so as to allow for an informed review. Incomplete or non-responsive applications will not be evaluated further. Applicants may revise their applications and re-submit them prior to the published deadline if there is sufficient time to do so.

### § 4284.512 Evaluation process.

(a) Applications will be evaluated by qualified reviewers appointed by the Agency.

(b) After all proposals have been evaluated using the evaluation criteria and scored in accordance with the point allocation specified in the applicable RFP, the Agency will present to the Administrator of RBS a list of all applications in rank order, together with funding level recommendations.

### § 4284.513 Evaluation criteria and weights.

Unless supplemented in a RFP, the criteria listed in this section will be used to evaluate grants under this subpart. Preference will be given to items in paragraphs (a) through (f) of this section. The distribution of points to be awarded per criterion will be identified in the applicable RFP.

(a) *Administrative capabilities.* The application will be evaluated to determine whether the subject Center has a track record of administering a nationally coordinated, regional or state-wide operated project. Centers that have ca-

pable financial systems and audit controls, personnel and program administration performance measures and clear rules of governance will receive more points than those not evidencing this capacity.

(b) *Technical assistance and other services.* The Agency will evaluate the applicant's demonstrated expertise in providing technical assistance in Rural areas.

(c) *Economic development.* The Agency will evaluate the applicant's demonstrated ability to assist in the retention of businesses, facilitate the establishment of cooperatives and new cooperative approaches and generate employment opportunities that will improve the economic conditions of rural areas.

(d) *Linkages.* The Agency will evaluate the applicant's demonstrated ability to create horizontal linkages among businesses within and among various sectors in rural areas of the United States and vertical linkages to domestic and international markets.

(e) *Commitment.* The Agency will evaluate the applicant's commitment to providing technical assistance and other services to underserved and economically distressed areas in rural areas of the United States.

(f) *Matching Funds.* All applicants must demonstrate Matching Funds equal to at least 25 percent (5 percent for 1994 Institutions) of the grant amount requested. Applications exceeding these minimum commitment levels will receive more points.

(g) *Delivery.* The Agency will evaluate whether the Center has a track record in providing technical assistance in rural areas and accomplishing effective outcomes in cooperative development. The Center's potential for delivering effective cooperative development assistance, the expected effects of that assistance, the sustainability of cooperative organizations receiving the assistance, and the transferability of the Center's cooperative development strategy and focus to other States will also be assessed.

(h) *Work Plan/Budget.* The work plan will be reviewed for detailed actions and an accompanying timetable for implementing the proposal. Clear, logical, realistic and efficient plans will result